

Why listen to Mary the Mother of Jesus? - 9.

To gear up ones pace towards heaven.

Why recognize the Body of Jesus
in the Living Eucharist? - 8.

Why feed on the Eucharist? - 7.

Why confess oneself with a Catholic Priest? - 6.

When God sees our hearts all the same?

Why go to Church? - 5.

Rather than pray at home.

Why be Catholic? - 4.

Respecting Orthodox, Protestants, and Jehovah's W., etc.

Why be Christian? - 3.

Respecting Jews, Buddhists, Muslims, etc.

Why and How to trust the S. Scripture? - 2.

Why and How to believe in God? - 1.

Why is there Suffering? - 0.



EVERY LAST THURSDAY
of EACH MONTH at 6.30 pm
BEGINNING THURSDAY 27th OF MARCH

OUR LADY OF THE HOLY ROSARY CATHOLIC CHURCH
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ANSWERING BASIC QUESTIONS OF FAITH "FROM ZERO TO THE EUCHARIST"

Catechesis No. 1

WHY & HOW TO BELIEVE IN GOD?

In these evenings, we'll read and try to explain some passages of the

- **Word of God (AT, NT)**
- **Teaching of the Catholic Church (from the Fathers of Contemporaneity)**
- **Personal experiences ...**

Introduction:

- Why believe? (the death box & the only way out)...
- Fides Qui / Fides Qua (Pope Benedict XVIth)...
- Theory of "Intelligent design" – (personal experience with the disbelieving Sicilian)...
- Video projections of DNA stem cells: "Drew Berry: Animations Of Unseeable Biology".
- USB & the image of a lemon / SEED & the genetic information of a lemon...

Word of God

The Old Testament

The temptation of foolishness, or possible situations of how to rise up to the existence of God

1. "The foolish think: "God does not exist". They are corrupt; they do things that are abominable". (Cf. Ps [13],1; [52],5)
2. "All men who live in ignorance of God are truly foolish by nature, and who from the good things seen did not succeed in knowing him who is, and from studying the works did not discern the artisan; But either fire, or wind, or the swift air, or the circuit of the stars, or the mighty water, or the luminaries of heaven, they considered gods, governors of the world. Now if stupefied by their beauty they thought them gods, let them know how far more excellent is the Lord than these; for the original source of beauty fashioned them. Or if they were struck by their might and energy, let them from these things realize how much more powerful is he who made them. For from the greatness and the beauty of created things their original author, by analogy, is known. But yet, for these the blame is less; For they indeed have gone astray perhaps, though they seek God and wish to find him. For they search busily among his works, but are distracted by their appearance, because the things seen are so beautiful. But again, not even these are pardonable. For if they so far succeeded in the knowledge gazing into the universe, how did they not more quickly find its Master?" (Cf. Wis 13, 1-9)
3. "Just as you know not how the breath of life fashions the human frame in the mother's womb, so you know not the work of God which he is accomplishing in the universe." (Cf. Ecc 11,5)
4. "He looks with favor upon their hearts, and shows them his glorious works!" (Cf. Sir 6,17).
5. "The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding". (Is 11, 1-2)

Created to find God!, But also through signs?... "Yes", but buy abandoning the wicked way..

6. "If you seek me with all your heart I will let you find me" (Cf. Jer 29, 13-14).
7. "Yes, if you call to intelligence, and to understanding raise your voice; If you seek her like silver, and like hidden treasures search her out: Then will you understand the fear of the Lord; the knowledge of God you will find... For wisdom will enter your heart, knowledge will delight your soul" (Prov 2,3-5.10)
8. "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call him while he is near. Let the scoundrel forsake his way, and the wicked man his thoughts; Let him turn to the Lord for mercy; to our God, who is generous in forgiving" (Cf. Is 55, 6-7).
9. "If I have found grace in your sight, give me a sign that it's really You who speak to me" (Cf. Jdg 6, 17).
10. "Why do you complain to him, if he doesn't answer your every word? God speaks in one way or another, but we don't pay attention!" (Cf. Job 33, 13-14).
11. "To me and have mercy on me... save the son of your handmaid. Give me a sign of benevolence!" (Cf. Ps 85, 16-17).

In regards to the 6 days of Creation and Evolution:

12. *"In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and a mighty wind sweeping over the waters. Then God said: Let there be light, and there was light. God saw that the light was good. God then separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." Evening came, and morning followed - the first day... [please see the Bible reference for the whole story of creation]... God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed- the sixth day". (Gen 1,1-30)*
13. *"His gaze spans all the ages" (Sir 39.20)*

The New Testament

14. *"Seek and you will find" (Lk 11,9)*
15. *Jesus says: "you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life!" (Jn 6,26-27) "Jesus said to him, 'Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe.'" (Jn 4,48).*
16. *"An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet" (Mt 12:39)*
17. *"He made from one the whole human race to dwell on the entire surface of the earth, and he fixed the ordered seasons and the boundaries of their regions, so that people might seek God, even perhaps grope for him and find him, though indeed he is not far from any one of us." (Act 17,26-27)*

In regards to the 6 days of Creation and Evolution:

18. *"But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day." (2Pt3,8)*
19. *"But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory now and to the (ἡμέραν) day of eternity (αἰῶνος = Aeon)". (2Pt3,18)*

Other possible rational solutions of how to rise up to the existence of God, if one overcomes the temptation of foolishness

20. *"Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made. As a result, they have no excuse; for although they knew God they did not accord him glory as God or give him thanks. Instead, they became vain in their reasoning, and their senseless minds were darkened. While claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for the likeness of an image of mortal man or of birds or of four-legged animals or of reptiles." (Rm 1, 20-23)*

Faith is fundamentally to take up a walk of life pleasing to God, but how am I therefore to believe?

21. *"Without faith it is impossible to please him, for anyone who approaches God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him!" (Heb 11,6)*
22. *"How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach?" (Rm 10,14)*

From the teachings of the Catholic Church

The Patristic age

23. *"The prophet cried out to you and he tried in vain: do not be like a horse or mule, without intelligence. You have under your eyes these things, therefore, and you neglect them. Wonders that God works every day have lost their value not for their ease, or but for the continual use [...] Admire such things and wake up [...]. The people remained astonished by the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ had filled many thousands of people five loaves, and then are not amazed that with so few grains the fields are filled for the harvest. Those men who noted the water change to wine remained stunned. Is there anything different that happens when regarding the water that comes into contact with the roots of the vine? It is always He who makes one and works also in the other [...]. In what is the origin of man who he himself raises the wonder? Where did he come forth from? Where does the structure of his body come from, differentiating each member? Where does his stature so pleasing to the eye come from? From what primary elements, and from what despicable origin?... He himself arousing amazement over other things, yet not loving such a great prodigy!" (St. Augustine, Discourses, III/1. 126, 2,4).*
24. *"Sometimes those who are excessively perverse fear understanding for not wanting to be forced into putting into practice what they could have understood" (ST. AUGUSTINE, Sermons 156,1)*

The Medieval era

The Ontological proof of St. Anselm, on the existence of God (It was fine for the mentality of that period)...

25. "The argument of prior knowledge: the idea present in the mind of man that one cannot think of nothing greater, requires the logical necessity of the existence of a Being that corresponds to this idea. 1) Now that we believe that you are something that nothing can think of itself greater. Or maybe that maybe such a nature doesn't exist, because "The fool says in his heart: God doesn't exist"? (Ps, 13,1 and 52,1). But of course, that same fool, when he hears what I say, and that is the phrase "something of which nothing can think itself greater", he understands what he hates; and that what he understands is in his intellect, even if he does not understand that the thing exists. It's another thing is that a thing be in the intellect, another is to understand that it exists. 2) But certainly, that of which one cannot think of nothing greater cannot exist only in the intellect..." (cf. **ST. ANSELM** of Ostia, *Proslogion* 2-3, 97-99).

The 5 proofs of the Existence of God – of St. Thomas of Aquinas

26. St. Thomas says "That God exists, one can prove in five ways: **1) For the First Cause...** all moves because it has been moved.. **2) For the Efficient Cause..** it is impossible to find something that be the efficient cause of itself (that is, it's impossible that a house build itself) **3) For the (passing) Contingent reality...** some things are born and finish, that means that they can be and they cannot be (fundamental for existence)... if there was no (necessary and primary) entity at all, it's impossible that something could begin to exist. **4) For gradation of perfection...** For the fact that there are found a minor and major gradation in things. But the major or minor grade be attributed to the diverse things according to how much they more or less match to an absolute (model) who we call God.. **5) For the finality of things...** Physical bodies word towards an aim... Now, all that is lacking of an intelligence does not tend to an aim if not because it is redirected by knowledgeable and intelligent being, just as the arrow of an archer. There is therefore some kind of intelligent being, from which all natural things are ordered to a aim: and this being's name is God". (cf. **ST. THOMAS OF AQUINAS**, *S. Th. I.q. 2,a. 3.*).

The Modern age

miracles, signs of God all prophecies, have the task of sending us back to faith; to hold this for me now minds will save us from sinking...

27. "Moses certainly wouldn't have thrown himself into so many and so grave struggles had not the Lord demonstrated a few secrets to him, having made him believe with certainty that He was God. Moses needed to understand great things whilst under the thorns of the Bush, so that he'd have the courage to face all that he would later have to face in favor of the people of Israel. Therefore sisters, we must seek reasons and seek to understand the holy things of God. Just as we believe that He is omnipotent, we must also believe that little worms of such little capacity as ourselves cannot understand His greatness, yet let us praise Him greatly so that He may be pleased in having us understand a little something of these secrets. (cf. **ST. THERESA OF AVILA**, *Interior Castle*, Chap. 4, 7)

Postmodern (or Contemporary) age

The 1st Vatican Council confirms: That with reason alone one can rise to the existence of God...

28. "It is now doubted that human reason, without divine revelation and the help of divine grace, can, by arguments drawn from the created universe, prove the existence of a personal God" (cf. **POPE PIUS XIIth**, *Enc. Humani generis*, 12/08/1950 – in *Denzinger* 3890).
29. "As a sacred synod (Vatican II) has affirmed, God, the beginning and end of all things, can be known with certainty from created reality through the light of human reason" (**11th VAT. COUNCIL**, *Dei Verbum* 6).

The fides qua requires the fides quae...

30. "The 'fides qua' requires the 'fides quae', the content of faith, and Baptism expresses this content: the Trinitarian formula is the substantial element of the Christian Creed... Therefore to me, this seems to be very important: Faith has content (fides quae), and if this content is not lived and confessed (fides qua), it will (risk to) be insufficient and an element unable of unification to the unique faith". (Pope **BENEDICT XVI**, *Meeting with the Parish Priests of Rome, Hall Paul VIth, Thursday 23 Feb. 2012*)

I didn't make it, but anyway it all moves and works...

31. Paraphrasing a phrase of J. Ratzinger: "In and of themselves, things exist, yet in only asking what's their functionality towards humanity makes us lose sight of the 'reason' and 'how' they came into existence... and

that it hasn't been us to organize them nor the least control them... yet meanwhile, they exist". (cf. **JOSEPH RATZINGER**, *Introduction to Christianity*, Edit. Queriniana, Brescia 2010, 17, pgs. 62-92)

32. "Faith comes from listening" (**JOHN PAUL II**nd - Messages 1992, No. 4).



Listening, then sight for Faith... requires becoming a follower?

33. "Faith's hearing emerges as a form of knowing proper to love: it's a personal hearing, one which recognizes the voice of the Good Shepherd (cf. Jn 10:3-5); it's a hearing which calls for discipleship, as was the case with the first disciples: "Hearing him say these things, they followed Jesus" (Jn 1:37). But faith is also tied to sight. Seeing the signs which Jesus worked leads at times to faith, as in the case of the Jews who, following the raising of Lazarus, "having seen what he did, believed in him" (Jn 11:45). At other times, faith itself leads to deeper vision: "If you believe, you will see the glory of God" (Jn 11:40). In the end, belief and sight intersect: "Whoever believes in me believes in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me" (Jn 12:44-45). Joined to hearing, seeing then becomes a form of following Christ, and faith appears as a process of gazing, in which our eyes grow accustomed to peering into the depths. Easter morning thus passes from John who, standing in the early morning darkness before the empty tomb, "saw and believed" (Jn 20:8), to Mary Magdalene who, after seeing Jesus (cf. Jn 20:14) and wanting to cling to him, is asked to contemplate him as he ascends to the Father, and finally to her full confession before the disciples: "I have seen the Lord!" (Jn 20:18). How does one attain this synthesis between hearing and seeing? It becomes possible through the person of Christ himself, who can be seen and heard. He is the Word made flesh" (**POPE FRANCIS**, *Lumen Fidei* 30)

Science and Faith? Some basic Catholic principles...

34. "For these reasons the Teaching Authority of the Church does not forbid that, in conformity with the present state of human sciences and sacred theology, research and discussions, on the part of men experienced in both fields, take place with regard to the doctrine of evolution, in as far as it inquires into the origin of the human body as coming from pre-existent and living matter - for the Catholic faith obliges us to hold that souls are immediately created by God. However, this must be done in such a way that the reasons for both opinions, that is, those favorable and those unfavorable to evolution, be weighed and judged with the necessary seriousness, moderation and measure, and provided that all are prepared to submit to the judgment of the Church, to whom Christ has given the mission of interpreting authentically the Sacred Scriptures and of defending the dogmas of faith. Some however, rashly transgress this liberty of discussion, when they act as if the origin of the human body from pre-existing and living matter were already completely certain and proved by the facts which have been discovered up to now and by reasoning on those facts, and as if there were nothing in the sources of divine revelation which demands the greatest moderation and caution in this question." (**POPE PIUS XII**, *Enc. Humani Generis* 36, 12/08/1950)

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

"Example that Fr. Volantino uses in regards to the Shepherds of Bethlehem & the Shepherds of Fatima"

"The story of the disbelieving old man of the villa at Noto, whilst we were hitching to Avola!"

"The certainty of the Intuition of a little brother regarding a Monsignor who then became Bishop"...

"The Story of a disciple asked his master how to seek the Lord alongside a lake"

"And dig, dig, so that you might find the treasure" (cf. SLC pg. 7).

"Joke about the professor who said that God doesn't exist".

IN CONCLUSION:

The tale of the two scientists and of the created universe..

IN SYNTHESIS:

The intellect is a gift of the Holy Spirit (Cf. Is 11), and has to be used sensibly...

NB. In regards to all the passages that we didn't read nor explain, if you're interested in having a deeper knowledge of the topic, according to God and the Church and experience ... you can make an appointment with us at the end of the teaching or through e-mail, and we'll come to your house as far as it's possible. We only have to coordinate and unite some people, who thirst for truth!. You find the e-mail on: www.poorfriars.net – with Christian love "Little Friars of Jesus and Mary".